

Why are you seeking this office? What improvements would you make? What is your platform?

Lakewood is a wonderful, vibrant, diverse community that attracts people from all walks of life, and from all over the globe. It's this sense of community that attracted me to Lakewood over decade ago, and it's why my husband Ed and I chose to stay here to raise our family.

I'm running for City Council because I love Lakewood. I love the old homes and the generations of families who inhabit these neighborhoods. I love the unique small businesses that contribute to the sense of place Lakewood has. I love how walkable and bikeable Lakewood is. It's this love that fuels my passion for the City and its people, and I'm running for City Council to make sure that Lakewood, and its people, can thrive and grow for generations to come.

My campaign is focused on making sure Lakewood continues grow on the solid foundation that has been built over the past few years. Like all communities, Lakewood faces its own unique set of challenges, but they are ones I know we can tackle together. I'm committed to making sure Lakewood remains a vibrant community, a place where small businesses can thrive and families can grow. In order to do that, I believe that we need to focus on four key areas: Affordable, Accessible Housing; Smart, Sustainable Development; Improving our Parks and Greenspaces; and Encouraging Small Business Ownership and Entrepreneurship. I want to work with my neighbors to reinvigorate block clubs, institute "office hours" and work closely with the West End Business Community to reenergize Ward 1. I would also seek a closer relationship with the Board of Education, to foster greater cooperation in order to bring quality recreational facilities to Lakewood. I would like to continue the work that I started on the citizens advisory committee assisting low and no income individuals. I would seek to increase funding for City programs through our Human Services Department, like the Child Care scholarship program and Senior Supportive Services. I would work to draw attention to, and if possible increase funding for, programs offered by the Lakewood Community Service Center, like the Food Bank, and Case Management Services, or programs offered by Lakewood Alive, like the housing outreach program.

I also believe that the experiences of my family, caring for young kids, while worrying about aging parents, paying student loans while trying to pay for child care, worrying about the rising cost of housing and healthcare, and all the other everyday experiences that come with life these days are really representative of the issues facing voters. I would be a voice for those families on City Council. I would work to implement policies that are mindful of the economic factors facing young people in Lakewood, and work hard to keep Lakewood a top destination for young singles and families alike.

If elected, would like to continue the work that I started on the Citizens Advisory Committee in low and no income individuals. I would seek to increase funding for City programs through our Human Services department, like the Child Care Scholarship Program and Senior Supportive Services. I would work to draw attention to and where possible increase funding for our Community Partners at the Lakewood Community Service Center in Lakewood Alive for programs like our Food Bank, Case Management Services, the Housing Outreach Program, and the Home Improvement Grant. On a related note, I would also like to work closely with our citizens who have disabilities, to find ways that we can make Lakewood a more welcoming and accessible place for those with limited mobility

Have you ever worked as a political lobbyist or undertaken lobbying activities? If yes, please note dates, the political entity lobbied and subject of that lobbying.

No, I have never worked as a lobbyist.

Date of birth: 05/22/1980	City of birth: Fairview Park, OH
Marital status: Married	
If married, to whom? Edward Grdina	When? 09/13/2014
Children, names and ages: Julia, 3; Oliver, 6 months	
Name of high school and year of graduation: Rocky River High School, 1998	
College and other post-secondary education (list institutions, dates attended and degrees conferred, if any: Cleveland State University, BA in Political Science, 2007 Cleveland State University, Cleveland Marshall College of Law, JD 2010	
Military service or voluntary civilian service (Peace Corps, Vista, etc.). For military service, list service branch, dates, current rank or rank at discharge and type of discharge.  NA	
Professional associations, etc.	
Awards or honors conferred: civic and professional (list dates):	
How would you improve communication between city council and constituents?  I would take a multifaceted approach in order to reach as many residents as possible. First, I would work to reinvigorate block clubs, working with motivated residents to form new clubs or jump start ones that have become inactive. Second, I would institute 'Office Hours' at a local coffee shop at least twice a month so that I can be even more accessible to residents. Third, I would like to start a monthly newsletter, sent via email or regular mail for those who don't use social media. Finally, as a mom of two young kids, my family and I are already out and about, so I plan to improve communication by being out and present in the community.	

Please list one great challenge and one great opportunity facing Lakewood in the coming years, and how you'd prioritize it on council.

Our biggest challenge is how to remain a Dynamic, Diverse and Thriving Community as we embark on Lakewood's Second Century. Market indicators are signaling an economic downturn in the next 12 to 18 months, and Lakewood is still dealing with State funding cuts from the Great Recession. Much of our infrastructure, including our sewer system, is over a hundred years old and was designed to meet the challenges of the 1900s not the 21st century. While Lakewood can now boast state-of-the-art educational facilities, our recreational facilities need updated if we are to remain competitive with communities around us. We need to encourage women and minority small business owners to come to Lakewood, so that can be a part of our thriving local economy. Finally Lakewood needs to continue to offer strong senior supportive services, so that our seniors can age in place in the community they helped to build. At the core of all of these challenges lies our greatest opportunity, the ability to work together towards a common goal, the chance to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our neighbors, regardless of race Creed, Color or Sexual Orientation, and build a city that will serve as a national example of what Democratic good governance looks like.

Opening statement on your candidacy (200 words):

Lakewood has been on an amazing trajectory the past 5 to 10 years, with new families moving in, new businesses opening up, and even more development on the horizon. But for Lakewood to continue to move in the right direction, we need informed leaders who can be a voice for the thousands of families that call Lakewood home. We need to focus on four main issues: Affordable, Accessible Housing; Smart, Sustainable Development; Improving our Parks and Greenspaces; and Encouraging Small Business Ownership and Entrepreneurship. My experience as a working mom gives me a unique perspective on the ways each of those key issues impact our residents. My work as an attorney has taught me how to negotiate in good faith, build consensus, and find common ground to reach a shared objective. The residents of Ward One deserve an informed leader. Informed leaders are committed to their constituents, provide timely answers, and act in a transparent manner. They take the time to research complex issues, find unique solutions, and have a passion for the community they represent. It's this type of impassioned, informed leadership that I want to bring to the people of Ward 1 as their representative to City Council.